(U) The Geographic Resource Center Has Info You Need: Maps, Data and Research

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Run Date: 10/29/2004

(S//SI) An analyst from the Greek shop deployed to the field for the Olympics wondered how it would be possible to access the vast collections of Athens maps necessary for the job. She contacted the staff of the Geographic Resource Center (GRC) who found, created and posted online a series of maps focusing on Greece, ranging from tourist to maritime to transportation. The analyst -- together with the entire field site staff -- was then able to tap into the GRC's website collection directly from Athens.

(S//SI) "The maps provided by the GRC on Netscape made it extremely easy for us to quickly check locations of incidents that were happening real-time without having to log into a cumbersome tool like ArcView," recounted the analyst after returning from Athens. "In addition, the hard-copy road maps and books were lifesavers. We repeatedly heard references to certain streets in Athens, many of which have the same name. The road map books allowed us to quickly narrow down the possibilities of where an incident was occurring."

(S) Many analysts visit the GRC in person so they can talk with staff about the kind of map they want and what they want it for. GRC analysts know what questions to ask and where to draw from the vast resources, whether for a planning map for the wall, a tourist map of Kabul, data for an ArcView project, or the pinpointing of a target. Most often, a single quick visit solves a simple problem. Sometimes the problems are harder.

(S//SI) Earlier this year, Pakistan military analysts following Pakistani troop movements were frustrated by the Pakistanis' use of a coordinate system that didn't match up with any current maps. GRC researchers found old copies of Pakistan topographic maps produced by the British in the 1940s -- which turned out to have nearly the same grid system used by the Pakistanis. After scanning and printing the maps, the NGA (National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, formerly NIMA) liaison then transferred the images to a CD for use by the analysts at their desktops.

(S//SI) "The maps dug out by the GRC researchers were used to locate many small villages not in the gazetteer, which in turn helped us track the reported locations of various terrorist high value targets," said ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, an analyst involved in the project. "We also were able to update and formulate the Pakistani military's order of battle and force disposition for the area."

(U//FOUO) If you are in the Extended Enterprise or unable to visit the GRC in person, the recently reorganized and redesigned GEOLIB website is worth an online stroll. Under the SEARCH tab, maps and data are organized by country. Maps for Power Point presentations -- or for putting a target quickly in context -- can easily be found by clicking on a thumbprint image on GEOLIB.

(U//FOUO) Geographic reference information is easier to find, too, on GEOLIB. Anyone wondering about whether large-scale maps provide detail -- or is it small-scale? -- or searching for the right kind of digital data will find a couple of quick-reference pages on the site. Online primers with the most basic map information and descriptions of different kinds of digital data like CADRG (Compressed ARC Digitized Raster Graphics) are a good place to start when looking for the best answers to mapping questions.

(U//FOUO) ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ is the team chief of the Geographic Resource Center, which is located in OPS1, Room 2S077. For research questions, call ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ For digital geographic data, call ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. Reach the GRC by e-mail at ▮▮▮▮@nsa (UNIX) or DL geolib (NT). The website is on NSANet at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ the URN "go geolib." Library hours are 0800-1500, Monday through Friday.

(U//FOUO) As part of Advanced Intelligence Research Services (AIRS), NSA's agent for non-SIGINT information acquisitions and management, the GRC is the Agency's repository for worldwide geographic information and geodetic data for standard and special purpose hardcopy maps, charts, gazetteers, as well as digital geographic data, atlases, and related geographic and cartographic materials. The GRC is one of three NSA libraries supporting analysts, linguists, reporters, technicians, engineers, managers, and other specialists throughout the NSA/CSS Extended Enterprise.